

REVIEWS OF BOOKS AND AUDIOVISUAL AIDS

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Review Editor

Dermatology, Hans Rorsman. Stedentlitteratur, Lund, Sweden, 1976; distributed by Year Book Medical Publishers, Inc., Chicago. (252 pp)

Dermatology is an introductory textbook written by the Chief of Dermatology at the University of Lund, Sweden. Written in outline form, it is intended to be used in conjunction with the *Color Atlas of Dermatology* by Levene and Calnan which is also published by Year Book Medical Publishers. This combination provides an excellent visual presentation of dermatologic problems along with relevant comments on differential diagnosis, prognosis, and therapy. One problem with *Dermatology* is that some of the drugs are listed by their European rather than their American names (flubenisolone valerate rather than betamethasone valerate, for example) or are not available in the United States (kinisocaine). Otherwise, this book is an excellent introductory dermatology text.

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Psychophysiological Aspects of Skin Disease, First Edition. Vol. 8 of *Major Problems in Dermatology*. F. A. Whitlock, M.A., M.D., F.R.C.P., F.A.N.Z.C.P., F.R.C.Psych, D.P.M. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1976. (248 pp; \$18.00, \$18.55 in Canada)

Dr. Whitlock has written a thoughtful and readable book on a subject often riddled by conceptual confusions. While other authors who write about the issues of multifaceted stress complex fall into mind-body dualism (expressed in terms of "organic vs. functional" causality), Dr. Whitlock maintains an even view of biophychosocial interactions. He is a psychiatrist who worked formerly as a consultant dermatologist. He understands psychodynamics and also the fact that skin lesions are often one mode of emotional response. He admirably avoids the easy translation of persuasive metaphor or symbolization as *the* cause of a skin lesion. There is a need to be selective in assigning a psychological etiology to skin disease. For example, he points to the fact that some authors cite the fact that one often finds that patients suffering from urticaria have lacked maternal affection in

the past. Dr. Whitlock indicates it to be an empty observation unless one knows how many individuals in the general population also believe that they suffer from maternal deprivation. Such critical and careful viewing of this complex subject is a breath of fresh air.

The author performs a service for his readers in reviewing psychosomatic concepts early in the book. The first chapter in the book is a lengthy and scholarly presentation of the history of cutaneous neurosis. There is a chapter on psychosomatic classification; and a general chapter on psychophysiological dermatology. The fourth chapter on psychological methodology may be overly long and detailed for clinical dermatologists, although it could be helpful to the research psychosomatician. Other chapters focus on hypnosis and the skin; the artifactual dermatoses; pruritis; atopic dermatitis; urticaria; disorders of the sebaceous glands; disorders of hair growth; and a chapter on implications for treatment.

The author has attempted to write a comprehensive book for the careful dermatologist. This is not, I believe, a book which will be highly prized by the reader interested in practical modes of rapid assessment and treatment. It is, rather, I believe, much more useful for the specialist with some research interest. I think that it should have a wide audience of psychiatrists, particularly those who are involved in doing consultation and liaison to other medical specialties. It provides a source book on a subject which is sometimes hidden in larger texts, with copious and recent references. It is an excellent reference volume for the medical student as well.

The only criticism I have is offered reluctantly. The print is small, the pages seem crowded and the illustrations are poor. The appearance of the book is unfortunately drab overall. This is in striking contrast to the author's scholarly and interesting presentation. The volume, then, stands solely on the merits of Dr. Whitlock.

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A Manual of Adverse Drug Interactions, J. P. Griffin, PhD., and P. F. D'Arcy, Ph.D. Bris-